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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: FEBRUARY 17, 2010

Summary: Coverage of Prime Minister Gilani's statement, backtracking on the judges' ratification issue, stating that restored judges "don't need Parliament's approval," and later his "surprise appearance" at the Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry's dinner in an effort to "defuse the judicial crisis" dominated front-pages of all newspapers on Wednesday morning. Reports of the arrest of Afghan Taliban's top military commander Mullah Baradar in an operation in Karachi also made headlines in several major dailies. However, newspapers also reported that the White House refused to discuss publicly the Barader's arrest, and Pakistani Interior Minister Malik termed the reports as "propaganda." The ongoing visits of several senior U.S. officials continued to garner extensive coverage both in print and electronic media. Senator Kerry's meetings with top Pakistani political and military leaders, and his willingness to "fund 'visible' projects in Pakistan" to stem the tide of rising anti-Americanism and improve U.S. image, received prominent display. Likewise, media also covered Senator McCaskill's meetings with Punjab Governor Taseer, Chief Minister Sharif, and PML-Q leader Pervez Elahi in Lahore. Also reported were Undersecretary Fournoy's meetings with military officials, and her press talk, announcing to "provide UAV ScanEagle to Pakistan." Reports and large photographs of the enthralling performance of American Voices together with Pakistani artists in Islamabad were highlighted on metro-pages of nearly all major newspapers. The launching of a U.S. program to provide grants to Bolton Market traders in Karachi who lost their businesses in the fire that followed riots in December 2009 was also reported. Media covered a protest demonstration in Lahore against the verdict in Dr. Aafia case. By and large, all mainstream newspapers penned editorial comments on the present showdown between the government and judiciary over the appointment of the judges. However, "Dawn," opted to editorialize Ambassador Patterson's recent remarks about Pakistan's economy, and noted that "as a major donor, America perhaps feels it has a right to expect that the funds it provides are used not just to plug existing fiscal holes but to build a foundation for future sustainability." End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: Govt. Likely To Withdraw Notifications - "The News" (02/17)

"In what is already being dubbed as a critical breakthrough in a critical period, the prime minister is expected to announce the formal withdrawal of the two suspended presidential notifications today (Wednesday) following his scheduled meeting with Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Chaudhry at 3pm."

News Story: Afghan Taliban's Chief Commander Captured - "Dawn"

(02/17)

"The senior-most military commander Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar of the Afghan Taliban was captured from outskirts of Karachi about a week ago in what is being described in Karachi as a joint operation carried out by Pakistani and American intelligence agencies."

News Story: Baradar More Dangerous Than Omar - "Dawn" (02/17)

"Known as a brilliant and charismatic military commander Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar was the second-most powerful figure in Afghanistan's Taliban movement. He was described by many terrorism experts as more cunning and dangerous than even the Taliban supreme leader and his old friend Mullah Omar."

News Story: White House Declines To Discuss Baradar's Arrest; Kerry Says Capture Proof of Strong Cooperation - "Dawn" (02/17)

"The White House on Tuesday refused to discuss publicly the arrest of the Taliban's military chief in Karachi about seven days ago but did not reject the suggestion that he had been captured. Earlier, while speaking to various news outlets, U.S. officials confirmed that Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar was arrested in a secret joint operation by Pakistani and U.S. intelligence forces. 'This is a major player in the Afghan Taliban, someone with a lot of blood on his hands,' a senior U.S. official told Fox News. 'If he's off the streets, it would be a serious setback for the Taliban in the near term and deal a severe personal blow to Mullah Omar, who has relied on him for years as a trusted associate.' Mullah Baradar's arrest was also confirmed by the Chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee John Kerry who told CBS News that his capture was proof of a 'stronger cooperative effort' between the United States and Pakistan."

News Story: U.S. Media Reports On Arrest 'Propaganda': Malik - "Daily Times" (02/17)

"Interior Minister Rehman Malik on Tuesday branded as 'propaganda' reports that the top Taliban military commander had been arrested in a joint Pakistani-U.S. operation. Addressing reporters outside parliament in Islamabad, the minister stopped short of either confirming or denying the media reports."

News Story: Taliban Deny Report Of Baradar's Arrest - "Daily Times" (02/17)

"An Afghan Taliban spokesman on Tuesday denied a U.S. report that the group's military commander had been arrested by U.S. and Pakistani forces in a secret operation in Pakistan. 'The rumors reported today on the arrest of Mullah Baradar are all untrue. It is a big lie,' Yousuf Ahmadi, a Taliban spokesman told AFP by telephone from an undisclosed location."

News Story: President Seeks Closer Ties With U.S. - "The News" (02/17)

"President Asif Ali Zardari Tuesday said that Pakistan looked forward to engaging more closely with the United States on bilateral political track, including strategic dialogue. U.S. Senator John F. Kerry Tuesday called on President Zardari here at the Presidency. Matters relating to Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009, bilateral relations, fight against militancy and terrorism and regional situation were discussed during the meeting."

News Story: Zardari Wants U.S. Aid Thru Govt. - "Pakistan Observer" (02/17)

"Talking to U.S. Senator John Kerry on Tuesday, President Asif Ali Zardari has stressed the need of channeling U.S. aid through the government in accordance with its priorities and programs to ensure transparency, accountability and efficacy."

News Story: No Money Before Audit, Kerry Tells Zardari - "The News" (02/17)

"U.S. Senator John F. Kerry reminded President Asif Ali Zardari during a meeting on Tuesday that they could not release money under Coalition Support Fund (CSF) for the year 2010 before the audit of

the disbursements made in 2009. Senator Kerry was accompanied by Ambassador Anne W. Patterson."

News Story: PM Tells Kerry How To Bridge Pak-U.S. Trust Deficit - "The News" (02/17)

"Prime Minister Gilani on Tuesday stressed the need to bridge the trust gap between Pakistan and the U.S. so as to put on fast track development in the militancy-affected areas, as it could have implications for the success of the war against terror. The prime minister was talking to Senator John Kerry, Chairman of U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who called on him at the PM House.... The prime minister suggested that in order to improve perceptions attached to the U.S. image in the country, Pakistan should be de-listed from amongst the countries whose nationals had been designated for special screenings at the U.S. airports; Dr. Aafia Siddiqui should be repatriated to Pakistan, and both countries, through enhanced intelligence-sharing and defence cooperation, should agree to a joint strategy under which the drone technology could be transferred to Pakistan. He also emphasized on immediate resumption of Coalition Support Fund to release the pressure on the country's budget.... Senator John Kerry agreed with the prime minister on the need of fast tracking the development process and hoped that both sides will soon agree on identification of visible projects to be undertaken with the U.S. assistance."

News Story: Kerry Meets Gilani: U.S. Agrees To Fund 'Visible' Projects In Pakistan - "Dawn" (02/17)

"In what is seen here as a major shift in its aid strategy for Pakistan, the United States has decided to fund large development projects to stem the tide of rising anti-Americanism and improve its image. 'Both sides will soon agree on identification of highly visible projects to be undertaken with the U.S. assistance,' U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry told Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani on Tuesday. According to a U.S. Embassy statement, Senator Kerry met political and military leaders and discussed with them Pakistan government's priorities for the most effective and transparent implementation of United States assistance funds."

News Story: Top U.S. Officials Meet COAS - "The News" (02/17)

"Senator John Kerry, Chairman U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani on Tuesday. The visiting dignitary remained with the COAS for some time and discussed matters of mutual interest. Meanwhile, a delegation of the U.S. Congress also called on the Army Chief. The delegation was led by Senator Claire Conner McCaskill."

News Story: U.S. Under Secretary Meets CJCSC - "The News" (02/17)

"Ms. Michele Flournoy, U.S. Under Secretary of Defence for Policy, called on General Tariq Majid, chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) at the Joint Staff Headquarters in Rawalpindi on Tuesday. According to a press release, they shared views on the evolving regional security situation, Pak-U.S. defence cooperation and other issues of mutual interest to both countries."

News Story: U.S. Takes Kayani On Board; 5-Year Anti-Terror Plan - "The Nation" (02/17)

"The visiting U.S. Under-Secretary of Defence for Policy, Ms Michele Flournoy Tuesday met with the Chief of Army Staff Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kiyani at the GHQ and discussed matters of mutual interest. According to U.S. Embassy sources, Ms. Flournoy discussed Pak-U.S. bilateral security relationship during her meeting with General Kayani. However credible military sources maintained that the visiting U.S. dignitary had taken General Kayani on board over the U.S. five-year counterterrorism program being designed by Pentagon for supporting anti-terror efforts."

News Story: U.S. Seeks Pakistan's View On Taking Strategic Ties Forward - "The News" (02/17)

"The United States is seeking Pakistan's views on how and in which manner to take forward their strategic relationship in the future, as cooperation in defence relations reaches 'new levels' at an

important time. Articulating these thoughts with the media, the visiting Under Secretary of Defence for Policy Michael Flournoy, who had just wrapped up meetings with the entire military leadership and even managed to make a quick trip to Peshawar, termed these parleys 'productive' and 'useful,' which she feels because of common interests would lead to a 'positive' future."

News Story: U.S. Ready To Supply UAV ScanEagle To Pakistan: Official - "Daily Times" (02/17)

"The U.S. is ready to provide the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) ScanEagle to Pakistan to improve its reconnaissance capacity, U.S. Under Secretary of Defence Michele Flournoy said on Tuesday. Flournoy was talking to reporters at the end of her two-day visit to Pakistan."

News Story: Demands U.S. Release \$2b Owed To Pak Immediately - "The Nation" (02/17)

"Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Defence and Defence Production, Lt Gen (Retd) Javed Ashraf Qazi, has called upon the U.S. to immediately release the held up Coalition Support Fund (CSF) worth two billion dollars to take the ongoing war on terror to its logical end.

Talking to a delegation led by U.S. Under Secretary of Defence, Ms Michele Flournoy, which called on him at the Parliament House, Qazi made it clear in the meeting that delays in release of CSF was causing enormous harm to our efforts for eradication of terrorism."

News Story: U.S. Asked to Build Long-Term Ties With Pakistan - "The News" (02/17)

"Punjab Governor Salman Taseer has said that the U.S. should take steps like China to build a long term, durable and deep-rooted friendship with People of Pakistan. He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of U.S. Senators who called on him at Governor House on Tuesday in Lahore."

News Story: U.S. Lawmakers Call On Punjab Chief Minister - "The News" (02/17)

"Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif on Tuesday said the promotion of economic activities and elimination of poverty, ignorance and unemployment were vital for the eradication of extremism and terrorism. He said that after the successful operations in Swat and Waziristan, provision of basic facilities to people of the areas would have to be ensured to win their hearts. He was talking to the members of the U.S. Congress who called on him at the Chief Minister's Secretariat here on Tuesday. Regional situation, the war on terror, bilateral relations and matters of mutual interest were discussed in the meeting."

News Story: A Tapestry of Dance & Music - "The News," "Dawn," "Daily Times" (02/17)

"The audience went wild in ecstasy at the National Art Gallery Auditorium on Tuesday evening, as 50 Pakistani youth performed with professional performers of American Voices in a Hip Hop Broadway repertoire, spreading the message of youth empowerment through performing arts. The show was organized by the U.S. Embassy in collaboration with the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), National College of Arts, Hunerkada College of Visual & Performing Arts and the Empty Space Theater. Minister Counselor Public Affairs at U.S. Embassy Larry Schwartz inaugurated the show and described the event as a rich cultural tapestry of dance and music, building a new bridge of friendship and understanding among the people of America and Pakistan."

News Story: U.S. Provides \$10 Million For Recovery Of Business Of Bolton Market Traders - "Nawa-i-Waqt" (02/17)

"In a ceremony today, the United States launched a program to provide \$10 million (Rs. 840 million) in cash grants to Bolton Market traders who lost their businesses in the fire that followed city-wide riots in December 2009. The assistance provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development augments \$41.6 million (Rs. 3.5 billion) in relief already provided the traders by the

federal and Sindh provincial governments through the Karachi Chamber of Commerce. The government assistance reimbursed the traders for loss of inventory and infrastructure; this U.S. assistance will compensate the business for lost revenues since the fire. Speaking at the ceremony, Stephen Fakan, U.S. Consul General for Karachi said the entrepreneurs in Bolton Market have suffered as a result of the destruction, but so has the economic chain of vendors, suppliers and service providers that depend on these businesses. He added that getting these enterprises back on their feet will ultimately benefit millions of Pakistanis. He praised the Pakistani and Sindh governments for their quick response to the disaster, in which a terrorist attack on an Ashura mourning procession sparked rioting that ended in the destruction of the market."

News Story: Students Flay U.S. Verdict Against Aafia - "The Nation" (02/17)

"Venting their outrage at Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's conviction, hundreds of students affiliated with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Tuesday marched from The Mall towards American Consulate to flay U.S. excesses in the name of justice and press international community to play its role for immediate release of Aafia."

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: Bombs Hinder NATO Offensive - "The News" (02/17)

"Thousands of U.S.-led troops fighting to capture a key Taliban bastion in Afghanistan risked becoming bogged down on Tuesday, running into resistance from mortars and scores of buried bombs.... 'We are advancing slowly because areas have been mined,' Afghan Army Chief of Staff Besmillah Khan said on the fourth day of the massive offensive on Marjah, in the opium heartland of the southern province of Helmand."

News Story: U.S. Marines Link Up With Units In Marjah - "Daily Times" (02/17)

"U.S. Marines, moving by land from the north, on Tuesday linked up with U.S. and Afghan units that have faced nearly constant Taliban attack in the four days since they were dropped by helicopter into this insurgent stronghold in southern Afghanistan. Also on Tuesday, U.S. artillery fired non-lethal smoke rounds to disperse Taliban fighters in Marjah - the first time cannons have been used in the fight to drive the militants from their logistical and opium poppy-smuggling base."

News Story: India-U.S. Alliance Irks UNAMA - "The Nation" (02/17)

"Three weeks had barely passed before the controversial agenda devised in fizzled London moot had begun to backfire. Peace is not likely to prevail unless NATO gives a reversal to its dual strategy of keeping up with India and Taliban simultaneously. The developments that have surfaced lately have taken international observers and UNAMA by astonishing surprise. Some UNAMA officials, who are directly involved with peace building measures and reconciliation with Taliban, are shell shocked and irked over certain steps taken by U.S. military command in Afghanistan to create blind space for India."

News Story: Arrested Americans Seek Release On Bail - "The Nation" (02/17)

"Defence lawyers for five Americans held in Sargodha for alleged militant links stepped up calls Tuesday for their clients to be freed on bail, saying the evidence against them was 'vague.' The five U.S. citizens were produced in an anti-terrorism court in Sargodha, where they were arrested in December 2009 on suspicion of trying to contact Al-Qaeda-linked militant groups and plot attacks. Officials said the court would rule Wednesday (today) whether to grant bail to the young men."

News Story: U.S. Citizens Case Adjudged Till March 2 - "The News" (02/17)

"The Anti-Terrorism Court Judge, Mian Anwar Nazir, on Tuesday reserved the verdict on the bail plea of five U.S. nationals facing

terrorism charges till Wednesday (today) while adjourned the case till March 2. The court listened to the arguments of both parties. Later, the court allowed the accused to walk in the jail and ordered to provide them an English newspaper."

News Story: 12 Killed In Bajaur Attack - "Dawn" (02/17)

"Ten militants and two civilians were killed when military aircraft bombed militants' hideouts in different areas of Bajaur on Tuesday. Eight civilians and five militants were also injured."

News Story: Iraq, Afghanistan & Pakistan At Extreme Risk Of Terror Attacks - "Dawn" (02/17)

"Iraq is the country most at risk from terrorist attacks for the second straight year, according to a ranking by global analysts Maplecroft, while Thailand has joined the nine countries most in danger for the first time.... The risk consultancy's Terrorism Risk Index based on 2009 data ranks Afghanistan second, with Pakistan and Somalia third and fourth respectively. They are rated at extreme risk along with Lebanon (5), India (6), Algeria (7), Colombia (8) and Thailand (9), a Maplecroft statement said."

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: Govt. Negotiating Pardon - "The Nation" (02/17)

"Pakistan government, currently engaged in talks with U.S. authorities to resolve Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's issue, is also mulling over seeking presidential pardon for the Pakistani citizen after the judicial proceedings conclusion. Sources privy to the ongoing parleys between the two countries have confided to 'The Nation' that the U.S. was disinclined to giving any concessions to Pakistan at this stage when the matter was still subjudice."

ECONOMY/ENVIRONMENT

News Story: U.S., SMEDA Discuss Joint Venture Projects - "Daily Times" (02/17)

"A five-member American delegation led by Ambassador Ms. Robin L. Raphel, Coordinator for Economic and Development Assistance, Embassy of the United States of America visited Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) to discuss joint venture opportunities in different fields of SME sector."

News Story: IMF Again Calls For Mini-Budget - "The Nation" (02/17)

"Showing its concerns over the revenue collection, International Monetary Fund (IMF) has once again asked the Government to bring mini-budget to generate extra Rs 25 billion in order to meet the annual tax target set for the ongoing financial year, sources informed 'The Nation' on Tuesday."

MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: U.S. Needs To Make More ME Efforts To Corner Iran: Riyadh - "Daily Times" (02/17)

"Saudi Arabia believes more sanctions and military threats will not stop Iran's nuclear program and wants Washington to put more effort into negotiations, including an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal, experts and Saudi officials said on Tuesday. After talks with U.S. counterpart Hillary Clinton on Monday, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal criticized Washington's push for more economic and political sanctions on Iran over its suspected nuclear weapons drive as too slow to work.... Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, meanwhile, said talks were still going on over a proposed nuclear fuel swap and any country which tried to impose new sanctions on Iran would regret its actions. 'Of course, if somebody acts against Iran our response will definitely be firm enough ... (to) make them regretful,' Ahmadinejad told a news conference in Tehran, without elaborating."

EDITORIALS/OPINIONS

Editorial: American Envoy's Remarks, an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn"

(cir. 55,000) (02/17)

"U.S. Ambassador Anne Patterson's recent comments on how the Pakistan economy is being managed are not entirely without merit. As a major donor, America perhaps feels it has a right to expect that the funds it provides are used not just to plug existing fiscal holes but to build a foundation for future sustainability. And yes, it must be acknowledged that whatever Washington has pledged needs to be seen against the backdrop of a recession in the U.S. It is also understandable that taxpayers in the U.S. and other donor countries 'will not forever pay for Pakistan's economic and social development.'"

Editorial: U.S. Must Do More!, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/17)

"President Zardari did the right thing by telling a delegation of U.S. Congressmen that their country would have to mend its policy towards Pakistan in order for the trust deficit to be bridged. For that to be achieved, he told the delegation, which included Senator Claire Conner McCaskill, that the country was between a rock and a hard place as it had suffered losses worth \$35 billion in the war on terror and was therefore in need of dire financial and military assistance from the U.S.. But his words carried a tinge of docility. He failed to mention that the drone attacks were indeed greatly destabilizing the country. The U.S. would have to change the way it is dealing with Pakistan, if it hopes to achieve success in the ongoing fight against militancy."

Editorial: Still In Need, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/17)

"The UN has recently released the Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan (PHRP) for 2010 which covers a period of six months and contains an appeal for \$537 million.... Continuing conflict means that the IDP problem is not going away for perhaps years to come, and there is no guarantee that there will not be another massive surge if the Taliban are resurgent and the territory now won is lost again. We thus hope that the donor nations respond to the UN appeal quickly and in full, because 1.1 million people are still in need."

Editorial: John Kerry should talk about Dr. Aafia, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (02/17)

"American Senator and author of the Kerry-Lugar Bill, John Kerry has said that Pakistan and India should hold talks and if India feels that Pakistan is involved in the Pune blast then that issue should be at the top of the agenda.... He has also said that the two countries should not discuss Kashmir in the first round of talks. It is beyond comprehension as to who gave John Kerry the right to decide the agenda for Indo-Pak talks or why he felt the need to interfere in this matter. What he needs to think about is the issue of Dr. Aafia, a woman who was taken forcefully to their country and has been beaten and tortured by CIA, FBI, military and other secret agencies for more than 5 years.... Perhaps Senator Kerry will use the lame excuse that he cannot interfere in legal matters.... Pakistani nation hopes that Senator John Kerry will not act as a viceroy, but would instead act on the Human Rights Charter; and if he can, he should play a role in Dr. Aafia's release, and strive to bring this unfortunate woman and her missing children back to Pakistan. Similarly, the Pakistani-origin Americans being held in Sargodha should be given fair treatment."

Opinion: 'Blinkered Justice'?, an op-ed Usman Ahmad in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/17)

"As a nation we suffer from what can only be described as persecution complex. The knee-jerk reaction of 'they are out to get us' has been our response to countless issues ranging from the war on terror to the general treatment of Pakistan by the international community. The sentiment has been on display in the case of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui too. Our government and our society failed to realize that the best way for justice to be served and for Dr. Siddiqui to be released from the U.S. custody was to arrange for a strong defence during the court case.... Given the many levels of appeal in

the U.S. legal system, there are still plenty of opportunities for justice to be served in this unpleasant case."

Opinion: Dr. Aafia's Appeal, an op-ed by Rafia Zakaria in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (02/17)

"Ironically the most magnetic aspect of Dr. Aafia's appeal lies in the most harmful allegations leveled against her. Simply put, while it is entirely likely that the stories alleging that Dr. Aafia grabbed an unattended assault rifle and shot at her American interrogator are untrue, the possibility of their being correct titillates every Pakistani wanting to defy the U.S.... There is much valor even in the dream of defying the U.S. but should such defiance be the only mark of heroism in our society? Concern for human rights, due process and justice are venerated principles that apply universally and indeed unequivocally to Aafia Siddiqui's case but they also do so to all other cases of justice denied which may not vindicate a country's suffering pride but whose victims are equally tortured and helpless."

Editorial: Taliban Putting Up Intense Resistance In Helmand Operation, an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (02/17)

"Beyond their wildest expectations, NATO and Afghan forces are facing intense resistance from the Taliban in the ongoing military offensive in the Helmand province. Meanwhile, the U.S. has claimed the capture of renowned Taliban leader Mullah Baradar from Karachi with a view to divert global attention from its impending defeat in Afghanistan. But all indications show that Washington cannot win this war because the Taliban are not the name of a group of individuals rather they symbolize the national resistance movement of the Afghan people."

Opinion: Operation Moshtarak And Beyond, an op-ed by S.M. Hali in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/17)

"Operation Moshtarak and beyond must take into consideration that there is no blowback to Pakistan, at the same time, trusting and enabling Pakistan, allowing it space to maneuver and operate while avoiding direct or indirect destabilization of Pakistan. The United States' responsibility is spelt out by Gordon Duff, a marine Vietnam veteran and former UN diplomat. He said: 'The U.S. must take into cognizance that 25 million Pashtun live on just the other side of the border in Pakistan. With the right help for Pakistan, the right economic programs and leadership, both countries could be helped and lives, perhaps millions, could be saved without pouring billions of useless dollars into the pockets of defence contractors infesting the halls of Congress, some with the arrogance and blatant insensibility of our actual elected leaders.'"

Opinion: Pakistan Delivers A Taliban Treat, an op-ed by Syed Saleem Shahzad in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (02/17)

"With the Pakistan military to a large degree setting the rules of the game with Washington for reconciliation with the Afghan Taliban, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Taliban's supreme commander in Afghanistan, has become the army's first major delivery for the United States' end game in Afghanistan.... Mullah Baradar's arrest could bring some limited benefits as he might divulge the whereabouts of some Taliban leaders, such as Mullah Hasan Rahmani and Mullah Jalil, who used to stay with him in Karachi. However, getting any information on Mullah Omar will be difficult as he moves around a lot.... Mounting pressure on Mullah Omar through Mullah Baradar could also backfire in that it might push Mullah Omar further towards Al Qaeda, which has raised impressive militias in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province, especially in Mohmand and Bajaur tribal agencies and North Waziristan."

Opinion: Coordination Of Trust, an op-ed by Muhammad Ismail Khan in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (02/17)

"In a recent development reported by The New York Times and confirmed by U.S. officials, a top Taliban leader, in fact number

two by influence, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar has been captured a few days ago. That a joint intelligence operation of Pakistan and U.S. intelligence agencies led to his trail was something that was allegedly weak until now. More than this latest exercise, Baradar's abode from where he was caught, Karachi in Pakistan, should push states and their institutions to further enhance cooperation among themselves. This story should be enough to silence those who believe that the division of militants along different lines is the best way of dealing with them. Although, in rhetoric, everyone is against terrorism, there has been a noted disagreement over what constitutes threats to a certain state and even to a certain institution. Thus, whenever there is a major attack, we hear state institutions blaming each other; within Pakistan, every major bomb blast is followed by accusing fingers pointed towards the interior ministry for not averting the attack. The division seems to have served no purpose; rather it breeds mistrust among institutions, which also fritter resources allocated to them."

Opinion: This Is Democracy?, an op-ed by Ameer Bhutto in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/17)

"U.S. Vice President Joe Biden recently stated that, due to Pakistan's nuclear capability and dysfunctional democracy, the situation here is a source of greater concern for the United States than Iraq or Afghanistan. This is most peculiar, since the present situation in Pakistan is a product of American hegemonic influence which it has exercised unabated more directly and forcefully than ever before in the aftermath of 9-11. Out-of-control events in their war on terror and the gathering steam against a highly unpopular government compelled the Americans to ditch Musharraf. Similar circumstances have now surfaced once again. The present setup is by no means indispensable to its foreign masters. In 2008, Zardari was ecstatic to oust Musharraf with the backing of his American benefactors. The time may have come for him to get a taste of the same medicine."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson